

SAMARITAN CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

OUR STORY TOO

LESSON 20, THE CHALLENGE THAT GAY AND LESBIAN PEOPLE PRESENT

This third and final lesson on THE ROLE OF GAY AND LESBIAN PEOPLE IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY explores the gift that gay and lesbian people have been and are to Christianity. Both the challenges and the contributions are cited. The reading assignments for this lesson are:

The article, "Homosexuality: Challenging the Church to Grow", by John McNeill, pages 218-222 of this course manual.

The article, "Reuniting Sexuality and Spirituality", by James Nelson, pages 223-226 of this course manual.

The essay, "The Contributions of Gay/Lesbian People to the Human Race", by Jeffrey Pulling, pages 227-229 of this course manual.

Read these articles all the way through first. Then go through each one again and answer the study questions in the space provided.

Then make a clear photocopy of your study question pages with your responses, or type your responses on separate sheets of paper. Send this second copy of your responses back for grading to the Samaritan faculty member who coordinates correspondence courses. The address is on the cover letter.



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OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (A) *Homosexuality: Challenging the Church to Grow*, pages 218-222 of this course manual

- (1) The landmark book that McNeill wrote that was first published in 1976 is entitled _____.

McNeill maintains that he wrote this book out of love and loyalty for:

- (a) the _____ in general
(b) the _____ in particular
(c) the _____

- (2) The motivating factors behind McNeill's work for the past two decades have been:

- (a) The fact that he himself _____.
(b) His increasing awareness of _____.

- (3) The dilemma in which many gay and lesbian Christians feel caught is:

- (a) In order to accept themselves and to affirm their sexuality, they believed that they must _____.
(b) In order to affirm their Christian faith, they felt they had to _____ and _____.

Both of these solutions lead to an unhappy and unhealthy life. McNeill became convinced that what is bad _____ has to be bad _____, and that, conversely, whatever is good _____ is certainly good _____.

- (4) The first of the three traditional stances taken by the Christian community regarding lesbian and gay persons that McNeill sought to overturn in his book was that God intends _____, and that therefore _____.

According to this traditional view, those who find themselves to be homosexual must _____ or _____.

In a one-paragraph essay explain what McNeill proposed to replace this traditional stance.

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (5) According to McNeill, the only healthy and holy Christian response to a homosexual orientation is _____.

- (6) The second traditional stance that McNeill sought to overturn in his book is that homosexuallly-inclined persons are somehow _____.

McNeill's counterargument is that gay and lesbian people are _____ and have _____.

Indeed, if lesbian and gay people were to disappear, _____.

- (7) The third traditional stance that McNeill sought to overturn in his book is that since every homosexual act is _____, then the love that exists between gay and lesbian persons is _____.

In a one-paragraph essay explain McNeill's counterargument to this stance.

- (8) What two kinds of evidence does McNeill point out that undermines the traditional understanding of homosexuality as a chosen and changeable state?

(a) New insights into...

(b) The collective experience of...

- (9) After the publication of his book McNeill was ordered to be silent on the issue of homosexuality and sexual ethics. He obeyed that order for nine years, but broke it because of three occurrences:

(a)

(b)

(c)

The crisis about _____ also convinced McNeill that churches do not have the luxury of time in dealing with homosexuality.

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (10) McNeill explores why there is no serious moral debate within American churches on homosexuality. For each of the following give a one-paragraph essay response.
- (a) Why is the liberal middle class uncomfortable with moral debate?
- (b) Why do the mainline Protestant churches not engage in moral debate?
- (c) What do the conservative and fundamentalist churches do instead of engaging in moral debate?
- (11) Why does McNeill regard the traditional interpretation of the Sodom story as "one of the supreme ironies of history"?
- (12) In a one-paragraph essay explain why McNeill thinks that gay/lesbian people and the liberal churches are wrong to steer clear of moral debate or to dismiss moral standards.

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (13) McNeill maintains that in the light of the gay Christian experience two fundamental issues of sexual morality must be re-examined:
- (a)
 - (b)

McNeill also maintains that there can be no valid moral debate on these two issues that does not _____
_____.

- (14) McNeill cites a paper produced by Lutherans Concerned. One of the conclusions of this paper is that: "Ultimately, lesbian and gay people within the church will make a great contribution to _____ and to _____."
- (15) Do you personally agree with McNeill's contention that the issue of homosexuality (and the presence/activity of gay and lesbian persons) is challenging the Christian churches to grow? What challenge(s) are most important to you personally? Do you think that the Christian churches are capable of responding to these challenges? Respond in an essay of three or four paragraphs.

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (B) *Reuniting Sexuality and Spirituality*
pages 223-226 of this course manual.

Nelson is the author of the books *Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology* (Augsburg Publishing House, 1978) and *Between Two Gardens: Reflections on Sexuality and Religious Experience* (Pilgrim Press, 1983).

- (1) Evidence that a sexual revolution has taken place in the last few decades includes significant changes in the cultural and religious understandings of:

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)
- (e)

These shifts in understanding have been spurred by:

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d)
- (e)

- (2) In response to the rise of feminism, gay/lesbian activism, and the plurality of family forms, there has been a _____ and _____ reaction/resistance.
- (3) According to Paul Ricoeur, there have been three major stages in the Western understanding of the relation of sexuality to religion. Briefly explain each.

First & earliest stage:

Second stage:

Third stage:

- (4) According to Nelson, two positive things about the sexual revolution of the '60s and '70s are:

- (a)
- (b)

On the negative side, _____.

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (5) Nelson believes that we are edging into the third stage described by Ricoeur. The Christian churches are presently engaged in more open ferment about issues of sexuality than they ever have in all of Christian history. Nelson sees seven shifts in the emerging Christian understanding of sexuality:
- (a) a shift from _____ to _____.
 - (b) a shift from _____ toward _____.
 - (c) a shift from _____ to _____.
 - (d) a shift from _____ to _____.
 - (e) a shift from _____ to _____.
 - (f) a shift from _____ to _____.
 - (g) a shift from _____ to _____.
- (6) In the shift toward understanding sexuality as intrinsic to the divine-human experience, sexual dualism has had to be confronted and attacked. This has meant questioning of two companions of dualism: (a) _____ or _____, and (b) the notion of God's _____ or passionlessness.
- It has also meant the reclaiming of _____ theology.
- (7) The book _____ by Joseph Fletcher prompted a great deal of ethical rethinking when it appeared in the 1960's.
- A group of American Roman Catholic scholars headed by Anthony Kosnick wrote a book in the 1970's entitled _____, which maintained that how one's sexuality is expressed is more important than particular sexual acts engaged in.
- (8) In a one-paragraph essay explain James Weldon Johnson's thoughts on how sexuality is deeply implicated in race problems.

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (9) The 20th century is not the first time in Christian history that a major shift has taken place in the perception of sexuality. In the __th century three Protestant groups in particular, namely _____, _____, and _____ began to affirm that the central meaning of sexuality is _____, not _____.
- (10) Nelson thinks that gay and lesbian people have had a role in the shift in Christian thinking about sexuality and spirituality, particularly in shifts 1 and 6 (or a and f). In an essay of three or four paragraphs, write your personal response to Nelson's ideas. In your own thinking, how important are gay and lesbian people in the emerging Christian understanding of sexuality/spirituality? Explain your views.

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (C) *The Contributions of Gay/Lesbian People to the Human Race*
pages 227-229 of this course manual
- (1) In what sense can gay and lesbian people be seen as "black moths", that is, an adaptation of the species that now gives the whole species a better chance for survival? Explain in an essay of one paragraph.
- (2) Pulling outlines four other contributions that gay and lesbian people can give to the rest of the human race:
- (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
 - (d)
- (3) Pulling cites the John Boswell claim that the very idea of romantic, mutual love between equals came from same-gender relationships. It did not come from opposite-gender relationships because a mutual relationship between a man and a woman is impossible in a _____ culture where _____.
- (4) Briefly explain why the gay/lesbian approach of responding to hostility is such an important model for the rest of the contemporary world.
- (5) Pulling maintains that there is and has been a disproportionate number of gay and lesbian people involved in:
- (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 20

- (6) In a one-page essay give your personal response to Pulling's ideas. Which one or two of these contributions of gay and lesbian people are most important to you? Can you think of other contributions that gay and lesbian people have given or could give to the rest of the world? Explain your views.

SAMARITAN CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

OUR STORY TOO

LESSON 21, REVIEW TEST ON SECTION D THE ROLE OF GAY & LESBIAN PEOPLE IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

PREPARATION

Use the study questions and your responses from Lessons 18 - 20 to prepare yourself for this fourth Review Test. All of the 100 questions in this test will be objective: short answer or fill-in-the-blank.

In your study preparation make sure to review the followings:

- Boswell's presentation of three kinds of oppressed status
- the importance of religious life for gay and lesbian people all through Christian history
- when homosexuality became viewed as a problem for religious communities and the priesthood
- the homoerotic poetry that came out of convents and monasteries and what its very existence showed
- the New Testament basis for idealizing same-gender love
- Sister Benedetta: what she did, what happened to her
- why the secular priesthood may have been more attractive to gay men than to heterosexually-oriented men
- the question of marriage or celibacy for Western Catholic clergy
- Heterosexual marriage ceremonies in the church: when they started, how marriage was handled prior to that
- Same-gender marriage ceremonies in the church: how old, where found, in what parts of Christianity were they used, the male couples invoked in the liturgy
- The ceremony of special friendship in religious communities: where used, what happened to it, what it presupposed
- Homosexuality in the early Christian era, how it was handled in the Roman Empire, when and why attitudes changed
- The restoration of gay culture in the 10th-11th centuries
- Gay men in the church hierarchy
- The church council that condemned gay/lesbian persons for the first time

OUR STORY TOO - LESSON 21

- The growing oppression of gay/lesbian people between the 12th and 14th centuries; what else was going on at this time
- The theologian who brought anti-homosexual prejudices into Christian theology
- Boswell's historical conclusions
- Boothman's hypothesis about how the oppression of women and gay males are related.
- Why Augustine viewed male homosexuality as wrong
- The treatment of lesbians and gay men in Jewish rabbinical law
- The legal penalties for lesbian behavior in 13th century France
- The persecution of women as witches, its relationship to sexuality
- The possible reasons why a woman might live a life passing as a man
- How the oppression of lesbians and gay men took a new turn in the late 19th century
- How the reason for the persecution of gay men is different from that for the persecution of lesbians
- McNeill's description of the dilemma in which gay and lesbian Christians find themselves; what this has led him to conclude
- The three traditional stances regarding gay/lesbian persons that McNeill has sought to overturn
- The two fundamental issues of sexual morality that must be re-examined in light of the gay Christian experience
- The three major stages in the Western understanding of the relation of sexuality and religion, according to Paul Ricoeur
- The seven shifts taking place in the emerging Christian understanding of sexuality, according to Nelson
- When another major shift in sexuality understanding took place in Christian history, what the shift was
- Pulling's presentation of the four contributions that gay/lesbian people can give to the rest of the human race
- Why the idea of romantic, mutual love between equals had to have come from same-gender relationships

INSTRUCTIONS

This is a closed-book test taken on the honor system. All of the 100 questions are objective. Be sure to read each question carefully so you will know what is being asked.

1. 1990年12月10日，在北京市召开的“1990年中国新闻奖”评选工作会议上，宣读了《1990年中国新闻奖评选办法》。

SAMARITAN CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

OUR STORY TOO

FINAL EXAM

PROCTOR

Find a UFMCC clergyperson in your local area who is willing to proctor this Final Exam for you. Send the name and address of this proctor to the Samaritan faculty member who coordinates correspondence courses. The address is on the cover letter. You will need to set up a time with the proctor to take the exam. Upon completion the proctor will mail the exam in for grading. The exam itself will not be returned to you but a grade and comments will.

PREPARATION

Use the study questions and your responses from every lesson in the course to prepare yourself for this Final Exam. All of the questions will call for an essay response - some short and some more lengthy.

Unlike the objective Review Tests in this course, this Final Exam is designed to evaluate what you do know, not what you do not know. You will be able to choose which questions you wish to answer, and so in your study preparation you may wish to focus on areas of particular interest to you.

INSTRUCTIONS

This is a closed-book test proctored by someone else. All of the questions call for an essay response. Choose ten short-response questions to answer (5 points each) and five longer-response questions to answer (10 points each). Be sure to read each question carefully so you will know what is being asked.

Bring plain or lined pieces of paper on which to write or type your responses.

You have up to two hours to do this exam, but you will probably not need that long.

